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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PTER, PREL, PGOV, PINR, AR, BR, PA, SY, IS, UY

SUBJECT: MORE ON AFTERMATH OF BUENOS AIRES BOMBING

REF: 1. MONTEVIDEO 003378 (NOTAL), 2. MONTEVIDEO 003017 (NOTAL)

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE IMPACT OF THE JULY TERRORIST BOMBING IN BUENOS AIRES STILL IS BEING FELT IN URUGUAY. THE LATEST MEDIA REPORTS HAVE FOCUSED ON THE POSSIBLE BEEFED UP PRESENCE OF ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES AND AN UNEXPLAINED BREAK-IN AT THE SYRIAN CONSULATE. COMMENTS BY GOV MINISTERS OF INTERIOR AND DEFENSE AND HEIGHTENED SECURITY MEASURES AT OR NEAR ISRAELI AND JEWISH FACILITIES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO GROWING PUBLIC NERVOUSNESS OVER SECURITY IN MONTEVIDEO. END SUMMARY.

THE ISRAELIS ARE COMING

2. (U) LEFTIST DAILY "LA REPUBLICA" REPORTED AUGUST 18 THAT 12 AGENTS FROM THREE SEPARATE ISRAELI SECURITY AGENCIES (MOSSAD, AMAN--IDENTIFIED AS MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, AND SHABAK--IDENTIFIED AS SIMILAR TO THE FBI) ARRIVED IN URUGUAY OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THESE SPECIAL AGENTS (WHO ARE SAID TO HAVE ARRIVED FROM BUENOS AIRES, SAO PAULO, AND POSSIBLY FROM ASUNCION) ARE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MOSSAD.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: ADOLPH H EISNER

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3. (U) ONE OF "LA REPUBLICA'S" SOURCES ASSERTED THAT "THESE AGENTS CAME TO ARGENTINA WITH THE ISRAELI TEAM WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE RESCUE OF VICTIMS OF THE ATTACK AGAINST THE AMIA (BUILDING IN BUENOS AIRES) AND NOW THEY HAVE BEEN SENT TO URUGUAY." THE SAME SOURCES ASSERTED THAT "IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE MOSSAD, ARGENTINA DID NOT ADOPT THE NECESSARY MEASURES WHICH COULD HAVE PREVENTED THE ATTACK (JULY 18) AND NOW ISRAELI SERVICES ARE ACTING DIRECTLY ON THE MATTER," CONSIDERING MONTEVIDEO TO BE A STRATEGIC LOCATION FROM WHICH TO DO SO.

4. (U) THE REPORT ALSO ASSERTED THAT THESE AGENTS HAVE MADE CLOSE CONTACT WITH URUGUAYAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, EXCHANGING INFORMATION. "LA REPUBLICA'S" SOURCES ALSO INDICATED THAT THE NUMBER OF ISRAELI AGENTS IN COUNTRY COULD BE INCREASED IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE, "DEPENDING ON THE INFORMATION THEY SEND TO ISRAEL." DEFENSE MINISTER HUGO MARTINS' RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT "THE CIA AND MOSSAD COULD BE IN URUGUAY UNOFFICIALLY" LENT SOME CREDENCE TO THE REPORT OF THE PRESENCE OF THE ISRAELI SPECIAL AGENTS. INTERIOR MINISTER ANGEL MARIA GIANOLA ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS UNDERSTANDING BY STATING THAT THE URUGUAYAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES "MAINTAIN FLUID RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, CENTERED ON THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION."

BREAK-IN AT SYRIAN CONSULATE

5. (U) FAJRI NIFFOURI, HONORARY CONSUL OF SYRIA, COMMENTED TO THE PRESS AUGUST 17 ON THE UNEXPLAINED BREAK-IN AT HIS CONSULAR OFFICES IN MONTFVIDEO THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 13. NIFFOURI, WHO IS THE SON OF SYRIAN IMMIGRANTS, STATED TO PRO-GOU DAILY "EL PAIS" AUGUST 18 THAT BURGLARS "TOOK 450 DOLLARS IN CASH AND SEVERAL BOTTLES OF LIQUOR, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY RIFLED THROUGH THE FILES AND OFFICE CABINETS, PAYING CLOSEST ATTENTION TO DOCUMENTS IN ARABIC."

6. (U) NIFFOURI STATED FURTHER THAT "THIS BURGLARY IS NOT LIKE OTHERS WHERE THE DESTRUCTIVENESS IS GREAT." ASKED WHETHER HE BELIEVED THAT THE BREAK-IN HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH SECRET INVESTIGATIONS OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN BUENOS AIRES, NIFFOURI SAID, "EVIDENTLY WE DO NOT HAVE ANY PROOF OF ANYTHING AND FOR THAT REASON WE CANNOT DISCOUNT ANY POSSIBILITY." NIFFOURI, WHO INFORMED HIS EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES AND HIS MINISTRY IN DAMASCUS, AS WELL AS THE URUGUAYAN MFA OF THE BREAK-IN, INDICATED THAT THE GOU HAD PUT SAUL CLAVERIA, CHIEF OF THE CIVILIAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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(DNII), IN CHARGE OF INVESTIGATING THE BREAK-IN. ADDING STEW TO THE POT, THE RESPECTED BUSINESS DAILY "EL OBSERVADOR ECONOMICO" NOTED AUGUST 18 THAT THE EPISODE OCCURRED AFTER CONTACTS BETWEEN URUGUAYAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES AND THE CIA.

7. (C) COMMENT: THE IMPACT OF THE AMIA BOMBING CONTINUES TO BE FELT IN NORMALLY TRANQUIL MONTEVIDEO. RECENT SPECIAL SECURITY MEASURES, SUCH AS PROHIBITING

PARKING IN FRONT OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY, AND IN FRONT OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, PLUS SOME BOMB SCARES, HAVE INCREASED NERVOUSNESS AMONG THE POPULATION. IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, THE PUBLIC MAY BE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO SENSATIONALIST REPORTING. THE LACK OF DISCRETION ON THE PART OF SOME REPRESENTATIVES OF GOU INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE PRESS, ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO THIS PUBLIC MOOD.

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